



Northeast District Department of Health

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www.nddh.org

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Dated: Friday, April 29, 2005

Contact: Linda J. Colangelo, PIO, Northeast District Department of Health
860-230-3001 (Town Hall) / 860-450-2245 (Cell)

PLAINFIELD AIR QUALITY DEEMED SAFE

Community Begins to Return to Normal as Evacuation Orders Are Lifted, Residents Return Home, and Students Get Back to School

PLAINFIELD – Local, state and federal officials announced late Thursday evening that air quality in the Town of Plainfield had been deemed safe following the aftermath of an enormous fire at the abandoned InterRoyal mill site on Reservoir Street. The announcement came at 11:00 pm.

“This is the hour we’ve been waiting for,” declared Linda J. Colangelo, Public Information Officer for the Northeast District Department of Health. “Representatives from the Connecticut State Department of Public Health and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR – a division of the Centers for Disease Control) have reviewed the latest rounds of test samples. We can now confirm that lead, asbestos and dust air samples are all well below federally established levels of concern.”

Residents who either voluntarily evacuated during the fire or were ordered to relocate the following day amid growing concerns of smoke inhalation were allowed to return to their homes Thursday evening. Residents who suffer from asthma or other respiratory symptoms were told to seek immediate medical treatment if health issues arose following re-occupancy of their homes.

Local health officials also deemed it safe for all Plainfield schools to reopen on Friday. School officials welcomed the news that Saturday’s Junior Prom, originally scheduled at the Town Hall, had been relocated to Plainfield High School. To assure the safety of attendees, officials ordered additional sampling for dust particles at the school. All results were well below established guidelines.

By late Wednesday evening it was determined that air samples for lead and asbestos had tested at the non-detect level, indicating that the public had not been exposed to either of the two main contaminants known to be present in the mill.

Public health officials became concerned early Thursday morning when levels of total particulates, often referred to as “nuisance dust,” rose above levels deemed safe by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Representatives from the EPA, ATSDR and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) worked around the clock to collect and analyze data. A fire that continued to smolder complicated an already lengthy testing process.

“Just when we thought that air quality had improved, fire officials found it necessary to demolish a wall in order to get at a few problematic hot spots,” said Don Gladding, Town of Plainfield First Selectman. “We were concerned that the demolition would kick up more dust. Fortunately, our fire personnel kept the area sufficiently hosed down and minimized any further potential of exposure. I can’t say enough about the exceptional service and protection provided by this dedicated team of volunteers.”

NDDH officials echoed Gladding’s praise, thanking residents for their patience and expressing gratitude to all agency partners for what they termed “an outstanding collaborative effort.”

Residents were also reminded to adhere to strict instructions to keep away from any debris that may have fallen onto homes or into yards and streets. EPA/DEH sponsored clean-up of affected properties began first thing Thursday morning and followed a systematic south to north progression through neighborhoods.

For general information or to report fallen debris, residents are asked to call the Plainfield Town Hall at 860-230-3001.

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SITUATION UPDATE **AS OF FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2005**

AIR QUALITY – DEEMED SAFE

Local, state and federal officials announced Thursday evening, April 28, 2005 at 11:00 p.m. that air quality in the Town of Plainfield had been deemed safe following the aftermath of an enormous fire at the abandoned InterRoyal mill site on Reservoir Street.

Representatives from the Connecticut State Department of Public Health and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR – a division of the Centers for Disease Control) reviewed the latest rounds of test samples, which confirmed that lead, asbestos and dust air samples are all well below federally established levels of concern.

AIR QUALITY – LEAD & ASBESTOS

By late Wednesday evening it was determined that air samples for lead and asbestos had tested at the non-detect level, indicating that the public had not been exposed to either of the two main contaminants known to be present in the mill.

ASBESTOS & LEAD – INFO & HEALTH RISKS

See attached fact sheets

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

Continuing at this time.

DEBRIS REPORTING & COLLECTION

Residents are reminded to adhere to strict instructions to keep away from any debris that may have fallen onto homes or into yards and streets. Agency sponsored clean-up of affected properties began first thing Thursday morning and is following a systematic south to north progression through neighborhoods.

For general information or to report fallen debris, residents are asked to call the Plainfield Town Hall at 860-230-3001.

FIRE DEMOLITION

Fire officials found it necessary to demolish a wall in order to get at a few problematic hot spots. Fire personnel kept the area sufficiently hosed down and minimized any further potential of exposure.

FUNDING

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announces initial funding for clean-up. See attached press release.

NUISANCE DUST

Public health officials became concerned early Thursday morning when levels of total particulates, often referred to as “nuisance dust,” rose above levels deemed safe by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Representatives from the EPA, ATSDR and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) worked around the clock to collect and analyze data. A fire that continued to smolder complicated an already lengthy testing process.

PETS

See attached fact sheet

PLAINFIELD SCHOOLS

Local health officials have deemed it safe for all Plainfield schools to reopen on Friday. Saturday’s Junior Prom, originally scheduled at the Town Hall, has been relocated to Plainfield High School. To assure the safety of attendees, officials ordered additional sampling for dust particles at the school. All results were well below established guidelines.

REOCCUPANCY OF EVACUATED AREAS

Residents who either voluntarily evacuated during the fire or were ordered to relocate the following day amid growing concerns of smoke inhalation were allowed to return to their homes Thursday evening. Residents who suffer from asthma or other respiratory symptoms should *seek immediate medical treatment* if health issues arise following reoccupancy of their homes.

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PRESS RELEASE

Dated: April 28, 2005

For Immediate Release

Contact: Donald Gladding, Town of Plainfield First Selectman – 860-230-3001
Linda J. Colangelo, NDDH Public Information Officer – 860-450-2245

INTERROYAL FIRE
AIR QUALITY TESTS TO DICTATE DECISIONS
Schools and Businesses Remain Closed

Plainfield – Local, state, and federal agencies continue to await laboratory samples to determine air quality following the aftermath of the InterRoyal Mill fire on Reservoir Street in Plainfield.

While initial reports indicated that asbestos had been detected in debris samples found over an approximate 2 ¼ mile radius from the site of the fire, preliminary results of air quality samples were below contaminant levels established by federal guidelines.

Town of Plainfield First Selectman Donald Gladding advised Superintendent of Schools Mary Conway to keep schools closed Thursday while officials await further test results of the affected area.

“We regret the inconvenience posed by school and business closures and the temporary relocation of some of our citizens, however, we are taking all necessary precautions to insure public safety,” Gladding commented. “Managing a situation of this magnitude takes an enormous amount of planning and coordination. We are fortunate to be working with so many local, state, and federal agencies that are aiding in this effort.”

Local health department officials continue to monitor the situation and reinforce the following guidelines:

- Do not touch or walk through debris
- Do not disturb debris by raking or mowing lawns before agency sponsored clean-up
- Residents should continue to shelter-in-place, keeping doors and windows closed
- For general information, or to report debris, call 860-230-3001

“While we are encouraged by preliminary test results of air monitoring, we continue to operate with caution to assure the health and well-being of our residents, said Linda Colangelo, Public Information Officer for the Northeast District Department of Health.

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**State of Connecticut Department of Public Health
In cooperation with**

**The Northeast District Department of Health
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**An Informational Fact Sheet About:
Asbestos and Pets**

This information was compiled by Dr. Gary Gluck of Plainfield Veterinarian Hospital, with input from Randall Nelson, DVM, MPH of the Epidemiology Program at the Connecticut Department of Public Health, and Dr. Bruce Sherman, Chief of the Bureau of Regulation and Inspection with the Department of Agriculture.

Sincere thanks for their assistance.

Long term, consistent exposure to asbestos is known to increase the risk of lung cancer. Adverse effects to a one-time exposure are not likely.

If you believe that your pet may have been exposed to asbestos debris, remember the following:

- Respiratory problems that pets may experience are likely due to smoke
- Animals experiencing GI upset may have ingested something other than asbestos debris, as the amounts of asbestos would likely be too small to cause this problem
- If you find your pet's coat to be noticeably contaminated with debris, wash your pet outdoors
- The amount of asbestos that may be picked up by animals paws is too low to cause a threat to that of the pet or human health
- Veterinarians can perform exams to determine if your pet has suffered smoke inhalation
- If you or your pet uncovers debris from the fire, call 860-230-3001 (Plainfield Town Hall) to report the location of the debris.